

23 November 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Office of the Deputy Director (Intelligence)

25X1A

SUBJECT:

Employee Suggestion No. 1330

1. The purpose of this suggestion apparently is to have some central office provide each analyst with a summary of each Government-sponsored intelligence research project in which he is interested. It is presumed that only external research is considered and not research conducted by a Government agency for its own use.

2. For years research administrators have struggled with the problem of disseminating adequate information about research to those who need it. Suggestions of the type under consideration have been reviewed and rejected as being impractical because of the virtually insuperable difficulty one central office would have in determining the current interests of each of the many analysts in the Agency.

3. We have chosen what we believe to be the more practical system of sponsoring indexed inventories of Government research, both internal and external. The brief description of each project included in the inventory is designed to enable the analyst quickly to check those items in which he might have a further interest. The reports of finished projects are usually found in the library. These will, contrary to the statement made in the suggestion, appear on an Intellofax machine run. In those rare instances in which a finished research report cannot be obtained by the library, the External Research Staff, Department of State, is prepared to assist the analyst in obtaining a copy. In addition the External Research Staff may be called upon to obtain additional information on unfinished research projects when necessary.

4. This employee suggestion is useful in that it emphasizes the continuing and pressing responsibility of research administrators to improve information to analysts about the services available to them to meet their needs. The suggestion states: "The remedy is to change the present system rather than to admonish analysts to use what may be already available." I would say: "A remedy is to make certain every analyst knows what the present system is rather than to admonish him." It is evident from the facts presented in the suggestion that knowledge about existing facilities is incomplete, and that the present system is not being used effectively. Only when it has been tried and found wanting should we consider changing the system.

5. It might be useful to consider paragraph 5 of the suggestion on "Disadvantages and Ineffectiveness of the Present System"

a. It is pointed out that "dissemination of reports of Government-sponsored research projects is too limited and too rapid." There is no reason for this. The supply of inventories of Government-sponsored projects can be increased on request.

b. "Government-sponsored projects do not now appear on an Intellofax machine run" The library makes an effort to secure all finished reports of Government-sponsored projects. Once they have been acquired there is no reason for them not to appear on an Intellofax run.

c. "Present compilations are unwieldy, unindexed and poorly arranged." Both the ERS and EIC inventories are indexed. Specific suggestions for making them more useful to analysts are always welcome and in fact are invited from time to time by the compiling agencies.

d. "Description of projects inadequate. Usually the actual report must be procured and examined in order to ascertain the scope of the project." This problem can never be solved to the satisfaction of everyone. There is no reason to

believe that the synopsis that would be entered on the suggested 5 x 8 cards would be any more satisfactory to the analyst than are the synopses entered in the inventories. At best a synopsis can only give the analyst a clue as to whether the project will be of interest to him. From then on he must secure the report itself, however laborious the task may be to him.

e. "Proper exploitation requires hand transcription on the part of the analyst, an operation which could be performed more quickly and cheaply by machine methods." It is doubtful that any machine method could satisfy the individual requirements of each analyst in the Agency or it will ever be possible to dispense with all "hand transcription."

6. The writer of the suggestion and other ORR analysts may be interested in knowing that the compilers of the Economics Intelligence Committee inventories maintain a 5 x 8 card file system containing almost exactly the same information suggested. A sample card of the EIC filing system is attached. This file is available to analysts on an individual basis. It is not yet deemed feasible to duplicate the cards and disseminate them to individual analysts, however.

7. The suggestion is meritorious primarily in that it has pointed up deficiencies in the so-called "present system" of disseminating information about Government-sponsored research to analysts. However, an award does not seem warranted.

[REDACTED]
Office of the Special Assistant
to the Director
for Planning and Coordination

Attachment

[REDACTED] (23 November 1954)

Distribution:

1 & 1 - forward

1 - [REDACTED]

1 - PCS File —